



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health Week Recognized in North Dakota ***North Dakotans Encouraged To Take Prevention Measures to Live Longer and Healthier Lives***

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is highlighting the importance that public health and prevention play in keeping all North Dakota communities healthy during National Public Health Week recognized April 1 through 7, 2013.

To highlight this year's theme of "Public Health is a Return on Investment (ROI), Save Lives, Save Money," public health leaders across the country are calling on Americans to take actions aimed at preventing disease before it begins and lowering the cost of health care. Every year in the United States, seven out of 10 deaths are due to preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. In fact, chronic diseases account for 75 percent of national health-care spending, yet only 3 percent of our health-care dollars go toward prevention. Here in North Dakota, 58.3 percent of our residents are living with a costly and potentially life-threatening chronic illness. But there are steps we can take to help turn these statistics around.

Many chronic diseases can be prevented by reducing the risk factors of poor nutrition, overweight/obesity, lack of physical activity and tobacco use. Three powerful public health strategies to facilitate changes in risky behaviors are:

- Promote wellness in schools.
- Promote wellness in workplaces. (<https://www.ndworksitewellness.org/>)
- Engage and empower communities to lead the movement for a healthier North Dakota.

Supporting these public health approaches to better health results in life-saving returns. For example, research shows that comprehensive worksite wellness has been shown to decrease health-care costs by 26 percent, decrease workers' compensation expenses by 32 percent, and decrease absenteeism by 26 percent.

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Public Health Week is part of the American Public Health Association's annual celebration of the role of public health and helps educate and engage Americans in the movement to create a healthier state and nation for ourselves and the generations to come. If public health can change risky behaviors in worksites, schools and communities in North Dakota, we will impact a significant portion of our state's population.

For more information about Public Health Week and steps you can take to prevent chronic disease, contact Kelly Nagel, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.952.8195.

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